

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Thomas Steel Strip Corporation

#### Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Thomas Steel Strip Attacks Waste on the Shop Floor and in the Office

##### Client Profile:

Thomas Steel Strip (TSS), a division of Corus Speciality Strip, specializes in electro-coating of very thin gauge steel for custom applications. The company serves the automotive, battery, electronics, office and household/domestic appliances markets. They are also the leading supplier of battery casings for Energizer and Duracell. Thomas Steel is located in Warren, Ohio, and employs 500 people.

##### Situation:

Thomas Steel realized that in order to remain globally competitive, they needed a renewed focus on continuous improvement efforts as a way to improve the overall effectiveness and profitability of the company. To accomplish this, the organization embraced a new enterprise-wide continuous improvement program called Business Excellence. The program is focused on reducing waste in both the company's business and production processes. TSS was looking to improve overall lead time, reduce scrap, increase throughput, and maximize customer satisfaction. They did a search to find an organization that was aligned with their objectives and had the expertise to help facilitate and teach their teams new tools and approaches. They chose the Cleveland Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (CAMP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, because of their leadership with local manufacturing organizations and our proven process improvement expertise, which would help them achieve their targeted results faster.

##### Solution:

TSS began the Business Excellence Initiative in September 2004, relying heavily on CAMP to develop the skills and learn the tools and techniques of lean manufacturing and problem solving. CAMP worked with TSS' cross-functional teams, which consisted of both hourly workers and management personnel, to develop these new skills. At a week-long Business Excellence boot camp, the core Business Excellence team trained in lean manufacturing, problem solving and statistical data analysis techniques. The goal was to quickly learn how to apply these tools to solve the challenges facing the company. Through CAMP's unique Plan-Learn-Do-Sustain approach, the teams demonstrated their knowledge of the new tools in simulated exercises and were ready to apply them to TSS's plant floor. This was followed by a series of Kaizen events on both the shop floor and in the front office including Quick Changeover SMED, Value Stream Mapping, Lean Office, and 5-S Workplace Organization. The Business Excellence Initiative is an ongoing endeavor for TSS. The management team and hourly workers continue to use the problem solving tools and techniques they have learned to attack business and production issues. An internal Business Excellence Champion has been put in place to oversee and monitor this day-to-day progress and drive the initiative forward. CAMP has become an important resource and partner for the company during this process, supporting the overall initiative and lending support and expertise to the TSS lean teams as they build their own skills to assimilate these best practices into their organization. Through these efforts, TSS has become a model site for corporate-

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level initiatives for lean implementation within the Corus Group.

### **Results:**

- \* Reduced line stops by 50 percent and increased capacity on nickel line by 13 percent with \$0 investment in capital costs.
- \* Reduced customer response time from 30 days on average to three days.
- \* Reduced scrap by \$500,000.
- \* Saved \$500,000 in first year.

### **Testimonial:**

"CAMP had the resources, abilities and people on staff that could do what we wanted and needed. They had a proven reputation coming in and have exceeded our expectations. We believe the kind of improvements they can help our company make can have a significant impact on our business and our community."

Denny Wist, President